Sixth Edition.

ARGUMENTS

FOR AND AGAINST AN

UNION,

BETWEEN

GREAT BRITAIN

AND

IRELAND,

CONSIDERED.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY T. BURNSIDE, 10, LOWER LIFFEY-STREET.

1798.

Br. 2027.98.[illegible]*

Harvard College Library
Coolidge Fund
October 25, 1939

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IT appears from a variety of circumſtances, that the ſubject of incorporating the Iriſh with the Britiſh Legiſlature, and forming a complete Union of Great Britain and Ireland, is undergoing a diſcuſſion by the leading characters of both kingdoms; and it is rumoured, that ſome meaſure may be propoſed upon it to the two Parliaments.

The queſtion is of ſuch extent and importance, and applies ſo warmly to all the feelings, prejudices and paſſions of the human mind, that it cannot fail to be univerſally debated: the only fear is, that it will not be properly debated.

If it is to be decided by paſſion, or by force, there is no miſchief which the agitation of the queſtion may not produce; if it is to be determined on its merits, it cannot fail to be uſeful.—In one caſe the rejection or adoption of it would terminate in diſcontent or convulſion; in the other, the reſult of conviction would produce ſatisfaction.

The object of the conſiderations which follow, is not to give an opinion upon any Plan of Union, which may be in contemplation, but to ſtate the general arguments which reſpect the ſubject, and to prove that it ought to be diſcuſſed with temper, and that it deſerves ſuch a diſcuſſion.

Let us firſt view the queſtion in the abſtract.—Two independent ſtates, finding their ſeparate exiſtence mutually inconvenient, propoſe to form themſelves into one ſtate for their mutual benefit.

Such is the Queſtion of Union, than which no queſtion can be deviſed more fit for ſober and philoſophical argument.

Again :—Every independent ſociety or ſtate has a right, conſiſtent with its exiſting duties and obligations, to propoſe the means which appear moſt probable, for the attainment of the happineſs of its people.

If it appears probable that ſuch happineſs can beſt be attained by remaining in its preſent ſtate, ſeparate and independent of any other country, ſeparation and independency ought to be maintained at all hazards. If it appears probable, that ſuch happineſs can beſt be attained by a federal or an Incorporate Union with another country, ſuch an Union ought to be the national object.

When the Seven United Provinces, being cruelly oppreſſed by the Spaniſh Government, ſeparated from that Government, in order to eſcape from tyranny, and to ſecure liberty and happineſs, they acted according to right, in declaring and eſtabliſhing their independence.

When the Sabines found they could not maintain themſelves any longer againſt the Romans, and ſaw, that by uniting with them, they had an opportunity of increaſing their liberty, their happineſs, and their power, they acted according to the principles of reaſon and right, in relinquiſhing their ſeparate independency as a ſtate, and by

their Union laid the foundation of Roman greatneſs.

This reaſoning and theſe inſtances, form a complete anſwer to all declamation upon the common topics of national dignity and national pride.—Were any perſon to exclaim, " who ſhall dare to propoſe, that the independence of Ireland ſhall be annihilated?" I would anſwer him by another queſtion—If the liberty, the conveniences, the happineſs, the ſecurity of the people of Ireland, will be improved by an incorporation of the Iriſh with the Britiſh legiſlature, ſhall we not for ſuch advantages endeavour to procure that incorporation?

England was formerly divided into ſeven kingdoms, which were continually engaged in predatory wars with each other, and the iſland was a general ſcene of confuſion and barbariſm. A wiſe and ſagacious prince united theſe ſeparate kingdoms into one empire. Did the people of the Heptarchy loſe their independence by this Union? Was a Mercian degraded by becoming an Engliſhman? Were the people of the ſeven nations made dependent—or were they debaſed and enſlaved by aboliſhing the local regulations which divided them into ſeparate and hoſtile ſocieties, deſtructive of themſelves and each other, and by aſſociating and uniting under one regimen, one code of government, and one ſovereignty?

We might extend this reaſoning, were it not too obvious, both to Wales and Scotland: How is a Welchman degraded by being repreſented in the Britiſh Parliament? How is a Scot enſlaved by becoming a Briton?

The queſtion of forming an Union between two countries, muſt never be confuſed with the ſubjection of one country to another.—The latter is ſuppoſed to be the reſult of force, the former of conſent—the latter is calculated to extinguiſh the power and independence of one of the parties—

the former, by the communication of privilege and the Union of ſtrength, to increaſe the power and independence of both. The one is therefore, never to be ſubmitted to, but from neceſſity, the other may be the object of choice.

An Union may be compared to a partnerſhip in trade. If a merchant finds, that from circumſtances of ſituation, want of credit or capital, he cannot carry on his buſineſs alone, with advantage, will he not be wiſe to unite himſelf, if poſſible, to an extenſive and wealthy ferme, and to become a ſharer in proportion to his contribution of induſtry and capital, in the ſecure profits of an eſtabliſhed houſe?

If, therefore, the meaſure of forming an Union between two kingdoms, whoſe ſeparate exiſtence is inconvenient, is abſtractedly agreeable to reaſon and philoſophy; and if, in many inſtances, it has been attended with advantage to the contracting parties, it is plainly a ſubject for temperate diſcuſſion.

If an Union may be advantageous, in what caſes is it likely to be moſt ſo?

An Union preſuppoſes that, when it is completed, the contracting ſtates ſhall be bound together by the ſame Conſtitution, Laws, and Government —and by an identity of intereſts, and equality of privileges.

When, therefore, one of the States, deſirous to form an Union, is inferior in point of civilization, agriculture, commerce, manufactures, morals, manners, eſtabliſhments, conſtitution;—and the other State is eminent and ſuperior to all the world in theſe advantages; it is evident, that an Union, in ſuch a caſe, muſt be moſt beneficial to the former; for there is every probability, that the Union will communicate, by degrees, all its advantages and excellencies; and the inferior Society will be thus placed in a ſtate of continual emulation, and improvement.

Let us compare then the ſituations of Great Britain and Ireland. The former enjoys the beſt practical Conſtitution and Government which any nation has ever experienced; the people are in general the moſt civilized, the moſt obedient to law, the moſt decent in morals, the moſt regular in religion of any country in Europe. They have the beſt agriculture, the moſt extenſive commerce, and have carried manufactures, arts and ſciences beyond any other nation. Their ſoldiery is brave and orderly—their naval greatneſs is unrivalled.

Now, in many of theſe particulars, we acknowledge and lament the inferiority of Ireland—our civil and religious diſcontents, jealouſies and diſturbances; the conſpiracies, the inſurrections, the rebellions which have diſgraced us, proclaim our defects in civilization and policy—that the former is not ſufficiently diffuſed to prevent irregularity and licentiouſneſs; nor the latter ſtrong enough to repreſs them. Our agriculture is by no means perfect; there is only one manufacture of great importance; and commerce, though it has been of late years encreaſed beyond our hopes, is not carried to that extent which the powers and reſources of the nation are able to reach.

Let theſe countries be united, and identified in government, in policy, in intereſt, what muſt be the unavoidable conſequence?—Ireland will be gradually riſing to the level of England; or England gradually ſinking to the level of Ireland; and it is obvious which is moſt probable.

If any perſon has a ſon uneducated, unimproved, and injured by bad habits, and bad company; in order to remedy theſe imperfections, would it not be his firſt endeavour to eſtabliſh him in the beſt ſocieties, and introduce him into the moſt virtuous, the moſt poliſhed, and the moſt learned company; and if he could once reconcile him to ſuch companies, and teach him to reliſh their converſation, would he not be certain of his

ſon's improvement, and of his finally turning out to his credit and ſatisfaction?

What can any ſanguine Iriſh Patriot wiſh for his country, but that its inhabitants ſhould attain the ſame habits, manners, and improvement which make England the envy of Europe? and by what means can he hope to attain that end ſo effectually, as by uniting with her Government, and binding up all her intereſts and concerns in the ſame bottom?

Suppoſing there were no other reaſons which rendered the Union of the Sifter Kingdoms deſireable, the ſtate of Europe, and eſpecially of France, ſeems to dictate its peculiar policy at the preſent day. France has not only united to herſelf, and incorporated a great addition of territory, but has rendered abſolutely dependent on her will, almoſt all the ſmaller ſtates which ſurround her. Geneva is incorporated, Savoy is incorporated, all the Auſtrian provinces in Flanders, all the German ſtates, on this ſide of the Rhine, are incorporated. Spain is ſubject to her influence; Holland, Switzerland, Sardinia, and the new Republic of Italy, are occupied by her armies; to every country ſhe extends her principles, and her intrigues, and on this kingdom her deſigns have been nearly ſucceſsful. No continental power could reſiſt her arms, Great Britain alone maintained the conteſt: but, in proportion as the power of France is increaſed, ſo ought the ſtrength of the Britiſh Empire to be augmented. If, from the diſunited ſtate of the Britiſh Empire, any particular part of it has become open to the attacks of France, or of its republican faction in England, that avenue of diſunion ſhould be cloſed. How could it have been poſſible for England to have formed the barrier, which ſhe has oppoſed to the French power, if Scotland as well as Ireland, at this day, had continued a ſeparate kingdom, equally open to French intrigue? She would probably have

fallen a ſacrifice to France, and the liberties of Europe would have fallen with her.

France well knows the principle and the force of incorporations. Every ſtate which ſhe unites to herſelf, ſhe makes part of her empire, *one and indiviſible*, and will not ſuffer any mention to be made in negociation of reſtitution. Whilſt in her affected plans of policy for the liberties of the Britiſh Empire, ſhe maintains the principal of ſeparation, as eſſential to freedom, ſhe conſiders the Union of England and Scotland as an uſurpation of the former; and leaving England to her fate would make Scotland and Ireland ſeparate Republics. France well knows the adage, *dum ſinguli pugnant univerſi vincuntur*; and ſhe has played that game ſucceſsfully; but as we wiſh to check the ambition of that deſperate, and unprincipled power, and if that end can only be effected by maintaining and augmenting the power of the Britiſh Empire, we ſhould be favourable to the principle of Union, which muſt increaſe and conſolidate its reſources.

If an Union may be deſirable between two independent kingdoms, it muſt be moſt deſirable when ſuch two kingdoms are united under one Sovereign, and have ſeparate legiſlatures; for they have all the diſadvantages without the advantages of an Union. The Sovereign muſt reſide in one of the kingdoms: *there* would of courſe be the metropolis of the empire; *there* would be the real ſeat of the government; thence would flow all the counſels; and thither would reſort thoſe, who wiſhed for favour and emolument. The kingdom, where the mornarch did not reſide, not having the origination of all counſels and meaſures, and having much of its rents carried away by abſentees, would be in a perpetual ſtate of jealouſy and diſcontent; and being ſeparate in all reſpects, but in the individual perſon of the monarch, would be a prey to foreign faction; and an empire,

thus compoſed, could never be in a ſtate of full ſecurity, for there never could be a certainty that all parts of it would purſue the ſame ſyſtem.

The objections to this predicament were ſo ſtrong in Scotland before the Union, that the Scots brought in a Bill of Settlement, to provide that their Monarch ſhould never be the ſame perſon as the King of England; upon this the alternative of Union or Separation became inevitable, and at length they wiſely preferred the former—What has been the conſequence? The Scots, becoming entitled to all the privileges of Britiſh ſubjects, have greatly added to their own civilization and wealth; have enjoyed internal tranquillity and ſecurity; and enabled Great Britain, by the conſolidation of the whole iſland under one Government, to reach that height of proſperity and glory which makes her the envy and the protectreſs of Europe.

In the ſituation which Scotland held previous to the Union does Ireland ſtand at preſent; except that the Crown of Ireland is by expreſs ſtatutes of declaration and recognition perpetually annexed to and dependent upon the Crown of England; ſo that whoever is King of England, is in right of that title, *ipſo facto*, King of Ireland. The King of Ireland, as the King of Scotland before the Union, reſides in another kingdom. The counſels for the Government of Ireland are framed in the Britiſh Cabinet; the Government of Ireland is actually adminiſtered by a Britiſh Lord Lieutenant, who diſtributes the patronage of the Crown; the Iriſh Parliament is ſuppoſed to be in a great degree ſubject to Britiſh influence, and near one million of the rents of the kingdom are annually exported to Abſentees. The jealouſies upon theſe points are great and unavoidable, and from the perpetual topic of inflaming the minds of the people in newſpapers, and the unvarying theme of complaint and invective by Parliamentary Oppoſition.

Nor can this inconvenience ceaſe whilſt affairs remain as at preſent; for ſo long as we form a part of the Britiſh Empire, we muſt acknowledge one Executive Power, one preſiding Cabinet; and it is of indiſpenſible neceſſity for that Cabinet to induce every part of the empire to purſue the ſame principles of action, and to adopt the ſame ſyſtem of meaſures, as far as poſſible: and as the intereſts of England muſt ever preponderate, a preference will be always given to her, or ſuppoſed to be given, which has the ſame effect. The Iriſh Parliament is certainly in its inſtitution independent; it may when it pleaſes act contrary to the policy of the empire; it may exhort the King to make war when the views of England are pacific; it may declare againſt a war when England is driven into one by neceſſity; and it has actually aſſerted a Right to chuſe a Regent of its own appointment, diſtinct from the Regent of Great Britain; it may alſo declare againſt treaties, and refuſe to ratify commercial articles. Now if Ireland, having theſe powers, ſhould at any time exert them in oppoſition to the conduct of England, the empire would be endangered or diſſolved; and ſo long as the Parliament of Ireland, from motives of diſcretion and prudence, does not exert them, it will be ſubject to the imputation of being meanly and corruptly ſubſervient to the Britiſh Cabinet; and the imputation being conſtantly repeated and always liable to be renewed, will have in future, as it has had already, a prejudicial influence on the public mind, leading the people to diſtruſt and to diſparage their legiſlature.

Add to this the melancholy reflection, that the Iriſh Parliament has been long made the Theatre for Britiſh Faction. When at a loſs for ſubjects of grievance in Great Britain, they ever turn their eyes to this kingdom, in the kind hope that any ſeed of diſcontent may be nouriſhed, by their

foſtering attention, into ſtrength and maturity.—Incapable of beating the Miniſter on his own ground, they change the place of attack, and wound him from the ſide of Ireland. Need I allude to the Queſtion of the Commercial Propoſitions, the Queſtion of the Regency, and the Queſtion of the Catholics; when we have ſeen the Leaders of the Britiſh Oppoſition come forward to ſupport the Character of Iriſh Rebels, to palliate and to juſtify Iriſh Treaſon, and almoſt to vindicate Iriſh Rebellion? If then, differing from Great Britain, in Imperial Queſtions, would diſſolve the Empire, and if uniformly concurring with her muſt ſubject the Parliament to perpetual imputation of criminal ſubſerviency to a foreign Cabinet; and if ſo long as an Iriſh free and independent Parliament remains, it muſt be ſubject to the Cabals of Britiſh Party; might it not be a meaſure of wiſdom to incorporate the Parliaments together, and that Ireland ſhould accept the ſame Guarantee for its Liberty and Proſperity, as ſatisfies the people of England?

It is notorious that, before the Union, Scotland had always a connexion and alliance with France; which, ſince the Union, has totally vaniſhed. Her feelings, conduct and policy have, ſince that period, been entirely Britiſh. It is equally notorious that a correſpondence was kept up with France, by a party in this kingdom, eſpecially ſo long as the Pretender lived, who had the appointment to all the Iriſh Roman Catholic Biſhoprics, and who diſpoſed of them in concert with the Court of France. It is alſo manifeſt that a connexion with France has been lately renewed upon new principles; and it is obvious that the French will never ceaſe to intrigue in this kingdom, whilſt we remain in our preſent ſtate, which preſents ſo favourable an opening to intrigue of every kind.

Now let us ſuppoſe that an Union of the Britiſh and Iriſh Legiſlatures were completed upon fair

and equitable principles, what would be our new ſituation? The Monarch would remain in England as at preſent; the Abſentee proprietors of land might in ſome degree increaſe; and London, as at preſent, would be the general reſort for buſineſs, for advancement, for pleaſure. But the Britiſh Cabinet would receive a mixture of Iriſhmen, and the counſels of the Britiſh Parliament would be much influenced by the weight and ability of the Iriſh Members; all our party conteſts would be transferred to Great Britain; Britiſh faction would ceaſe to operate here; there would be no jealouſy of Britiſh Influence on the Cabinet or Parliament; there would be no claſhing of diſtinct intereſts, no fear of Ireland becoming too powerful to govern. France could no longer ſpeculate on the nature of our diſtinct Government and Parliament; and hope to ſeparate the kingdom, in fact, from Great Britain, as it is already ſeparated in theory. The cultivation, the improvement of Ireland, like that of Scotland, would be peculiarly attended to, as the increaſe of our wealth, conſequence, ability, and power, muſt tend to increaſe the ſecurity of the Empire, not to endanger it; and in proportion that we felt the benefit of an Union, our attachment to it would be ſtrengthened.

All writers have agreed in condemning what is called *imperium in imperio*. It is this vice of conſtitution which has annihilated Poland, where every ſenator was a ſovereign; and has enſlaved the Seven United Provinces, where each province was a Sovereign. Franklin and Waſhington, the founders of the American Empire, had not courage in their firſt project of a conſtitution for the American ſtates, to exclude this radical evil, but left each ſtate independent. So ſoon as the preſſure of neceſſity, which has confederated the ſtates, ceaſed in conſequence of peace, the fault of ſuch a conſtitution became evident: it was clear to men of common capacity, that an empire, conſiſting

Thirteen independent ſocieties, without one common Imperial controul, would ſoon divide into Thirteen independent empires. To obviate this neceſſary, though poſſible diſtant conſequence, the wiſdom of the Americans projected a new conſtitution, in which this original vice was remedied; the ſeparate independency of each ſtate was wiſely relinqniſhed; a general legiſlative, and a general executive was formed for the government of the Union in every imperial concern; and each reſpective ſtate was confined to local and municipal objects. At the ſame time, a juſt deference was paid to all the Teſt Laws and religious eſtabliſhments throughout the Union; and each ſtate being allowed to maintain its eccleſiaſtical arrangements, all religious ſtruggle and animoſity was prevented.

To the wiſdom of this plan of Union the ſtrength and happineſs of the United States may be attributed—If each had retained to itſelf its ſeparate independent Legiſlature, is it probable that the American Empire could have laſted to the preſent day? If French intrigue had at one time ſuch influence in America as nearly to have overturned the exiſting Union, how could its efforts have been reſiſted, when the gaining of one ſtate alone might have diſſolved the Union? To injure America in its preſent form, a majority of the repreſentatives of the whole Union muſt be ſeduced; to have deſtroyed her power under her firſt Conſtitution, the corruption of one ſtate alone would have been ſufficient.

What are the ſentiments of Mr. Adams, the Preſident of the United States, with reſpect to their firſt federal, and the preſent incorporate Union—"The former," ſays he, "was formed "upon the model and example of all the con-"federacies, ancient and modern, in which the "federal council was only a diplomatic body; "even the Lycian, which is thought to have been "the beſt, was no more. The magnitude of

" territory, the population, the wealth and com-
" merce, and eſpecially the rapid growth of the
" United States, have ſhewn ſuch a government
" to be inadequate for their wants; and the new
" ſyſtem which ſeems admirably calculated to
" unite their intereſts and affections, and bring
" them to an uniformity of principles and ſenti-
" ments, is equally well combined to unite their
" wills and forces as a ſingle nation. A reſult of
" accommodation cannot be ſuppoſed to reach
" the perfection of any one; but the conception
" of ſuch an idea, and the deliberate Union of ſo
" great and various a people, in ſuch a plan, is
" without all partiality or prejudice, if not the
" greateſt exertion of human underſtanding, the
" greateſt ſingle effort of rational deliberation
" which the world has ever ſeen."

If ſuch are the ſentiments of the preſent, let us advert to the opinions of their late Preſident, General Waſhington. In the letter addreſſing the preſent conſtitution of America, for acceptation, he has theſe words—" In all our deliberations upon
" this ſubject, we kept ſteadily in our view, that
" which appears to us the greateſt intereſt of every
" true American, *the Conſolidation of our Union*—
" in which is involved our property, ſafety, per-
" haps our national exiſtence. This important
" conſideration, ſeriouſly and deeply impreſſed upon
" our minds, led each ſtate in the convention to be
" leſs rigid in points of inferior magnitude, than
" might have been otherwiſe expected; and thus
" the conſtitution, which we now preſent, is the
" reſult of a ſpirit of amity, and of that mutual
" deference and conceſſion, which the peculiarity
" of our political ſituation rendered indiſpen-
" ſable."

When, therefore, an Union is propoſed to our conſideration, it may not be prudent for us to ſpurn at a principle which the ſagacity of Adams, and the virtue of Waſhington, conſidered as indiſpen-

ſable to the proſperity, ſafety, and perhaps the exiſtence of America; a principle, which has diſappointed the prophecy of politicians, that the American Union would ſplit into ſeparate and contemptible ſtates; which has preſerved her from the intrigue and corruptions and inſolence of France; and which enables her to defy the menance of that unprincipled power with conſcious ſuperiority.

Having conſidered a few general topics, which the queſtion of Union naturally ſuggeſts, let us examine the arguments which reſult from the particular ſituation of Ireland, as to its property, its eſtabliſhments, and religious diviſions.

Nine-tenths of the property of Ireland are in poſſeſſion of Britiſh Deſcendants. Their lands were taken from the original inhabitants, and confirmed to the preſent poſſeſſors, chiefly by the Act of Settlement; but a large part of them was held under Britiſh Acts of Parliament for a century. The Poſſeſſors of theſe lands are of the Proteſtant religion, and acknowledge the King as the head of their church; whereas the original inhabitants are Catholics, and acknowledge the ſpiritual juriſdiction of a foreign power. Theſe Proteſtants thus poſſeſſing nine tenths of the property, are only one-fourth of the inhabitants in number, and they have been obliged to rely upon Britiſh aſſiſtance, for the preſervation of their property and exiſtence at different periods.

The eſtabliſhed Religion is the Proteſtant, and the church is, in Conſtitution, ſimilar to that of England, and endowed with the Tythes of the whole Kingdom, and with great property in land. The paſtors of the diſſenting Proteſtants are in a degree ſupported by grants of the Legiſlature.

The Catholics having ſhewn great power in the conteſt at the Revolution, were long ſubjected to a ſevere code of laws, which kept them in ſubordination; that code has, within theſe few years, been almoſt entirely repealed; but, though they enjoy

a complete toleration, they are by no means contented, but demand political equality with the Proteſtents, and ſuch an alteration in the Parliamentary Conſtitution, as will give their numbers proportionate power,

The Proteſtants, recollecting the ſtruggles which were made by the Catholics in the reign of Elizabeth, in the reign of Charles the Firſt, and in the reign of James the Second, and poſſibly fancying that they diſcover ſimilar views in the preſent unhappy conteſt, act with diſtruſt and caution. They plauſibly argue, that thoſe who have the ſuperiority of number, when once they can obtain the power, will not long want the property of the ſtate. They guard therefore with vigilance their Eccleſiaſtical and Parlimentary Eſtabliſhments, and look to Great Britain as the guarantee of their ſafety and importance.

The Proteſtants ſtate, that when the Catholics were reſtrained by ſevere laws, the kingdom continued in tranquility for a century ; but ſo ſoon as national confidence, the reſult of that tranquility, induced them to repeal the reſtrictions by which the Catholics were bound, the antient ſpirit of rivalry rivived, and the Catholics demanded ſuch a change of the Conſtitution, as would gradually transfer to them all the power of the ſtate.

The Proteſtants feel likewiſe other cauſes of diſtruſt, ſuggeſted by recent circumſtances, on which it is deſirable to caſt a veil, when accuſation on one ſide, and juſtification on the other, tend more to exaſperate than to conciliate, and to prolong our diſtractions than to heal them.

Would to God it were poſſible to bury all that has paſſed in benevolent oblivion ; but ſuch a conſummation, though devoutly wiſhed, cannot be ſuddenly expected. Whilſt the opinions of Europe are afloat; when all the foundations of ſociety are, as it were, broken up and torn aſunder; when all the old principles and no-

tions, which bound us together in ſubordination and peace, are looſened or diſſolved; when it appears dubious and uncertain what turn the public mind will aſſume, and in what ſyſtem it will ultimately repoſe; the expectation of any quick return to former diſpoſitions of confidence, and habits of amity, are poſſibly chimerical.

In the mean while, under the preſent temper and feelings, it is not to be hoped that Proteſtants will conſent to ſurrender their political powers, much leſs can they be perſuaded, that they could do it with ſafety.

At the ſame time, whilſt Ireland continues a ſeparate kingdom, the Catholics will not drop their claims, nor the argument of numbers in their favour So far from dropping their claims, they have already renewed them; and the Catholics of Waterford, in an addreſs to the Lord Lieutenant, have repeated their demand for political equality, and advanced it on a plea of merit. They have ſtill, and will ever have electioneering partiſans in Parliament, and ſpeculative advocates in England to feed their hopes; and they will be ſupported by every open oppoſer, or ſecret ill-wiſher to the government.

If then the ſeparate Conſtitution and Eſtabliſhments, and Teſt Laws of Ireland, are to continue as at preſent, the kingdom muſt remain in a continual ſtate of irritation. The numbers of Catholics compared to Proteſtants are as three to one. Modern political writers upon Religious Eſtabliſhments lay it down as a principle, that every ſtate ought to eſtabliſh that religious ſect which is moſt numerous; but as it happens that, in Ireland, the moſt numerous religious ſect does not acknowledge the ſupremacy of the ſtate, but profeſſes itſelf to be ſubject to a foreign juriſdiction; their religion could not be eſtabliſhed, without deſtroying the Conſtitution, which is founded on the principles

of Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Liberty, and the excluſion of foreign interference and juriſdiction.

But ſuppoſe, at length, that the Proteſtants, worn out by importunity, concede to the demand of political Equality made by the Catholics—what are the conſequences?

In the firſt place, the preſent Parliamentary Teſt Oaths muſt be repealed, and a new Oath framed to meet Catholic feelings, and admit the juriſdiction of the Pope.

In the ſecond place, the Act of Supremacy and of Uniformity muſt be repealed. For nothing could be ſo abſurd, as to make men who deny the ſupremacy of the King, and the competency of Parliament in Eccleſiaſtical Concerns, members of the ſupreme power, viz. the Legiſlature; and at the ſame time, to ſubject theſe very men to the penalties of Premunire and Treaſon for denying that ſupremacy and competency.

In the third place, you eſtabliſh the principle, that the State is indifferent in religious concerns, and that it is of no conſequence to the State, what is the religion of its ſubjects; from which it follows, either that there ought to be no eſtabliſhed religion at all, but that religion ought to be left to chance—or, ſecondly, that all religions ſhould be equally eſtabliſhed—or, thirdly, that if one is to be eſtabliſhed for the ſake of religious inſtruction, it ought to be the religion of the majority, which is the Catholic.

In the fourth place, you eſtabliſh, or acquieſce in the right of the Pope to a real, and eſſential juriſdiction within this realm, in all matters relating to the Church and its Government; and the right which has been aſſerted of the College of Cardinals, which is the Pope's Cabinet, to manage the eccleſiaſtical affairs of Ireland.

Thus ſo ſoon as the Catholics of Ireland are admitted into the Legiſlature, and the Teſt Oaths and Act of Supremacy repealed, the Proteſtant

Church Eſtabliſhment becomes a public wrong.—*That* Eſtabliſhment is defenſible at preſent, becauſe on principles of reaſon, and from the nature of a free conſtitution, no religious ſect can claim a right to be eſtabliſhed and ſupported by the ſtate which denies the competency of the ſtate to regulate their conduct; but when that principle is abandoned, the defence of the Proteſtant Church Eſtabliſhment is abandoned alſo.

It further follows, from the admiſſion of the Catholics to political equality, that the frame of the Houſe of Commons ſhould be reformed. It is a known hiſtorical fact, that the Iriſh Houſe of Commons was framed with the ſole view of excluding Roman Catholics; when therefore the principle of excluding Roman Catholics is given up, the alteration of the Houſe of Commons in favour of the Catholics follows of courſe.

Admitting the Catholics to ſeats in the Legiſlature, and retaining the preſent Parliamentary Conſtitution, would be like inviting a man to dinner, and on his acceptance of the invitation, ſhutting the door in his face.

If then Reform muſt follow what is called Emancipation, and one be the unavoidable conſequence of the other, would not a revolution of power ſoon take place? would it not paſs from Proteſtant into Catholic hands? and what hope could the Proteſtants retain of preſerving their ſituation when they had loſt their power in the Legiſlature, and their right to the Church Eſtabliſhment?

Let us conſider then what would be the natural effects of a favourable Legiſlative Union.

Firſt—The empire would have but one Legiſlature, one organ of the public will, and the dangers which ariſe from an *imperium in imperio*, from two ſupreme powers would be avoided.

Secondly—Ireland would be in a *natural* ſituation; for all the Proteſtants of the empire being united, ſhe would have the proportion of fourteen

to three in favour of her eſtabliſhment; whereas at preſent there is a proportion of 3 to 1 againſt it.

Thirdly—The Catholics would loſe the advantage of the argument of numbers, which they at preſent enjoy, and the Conſtitution of the Empire would agree with the theory.

Fourthly—Whilſt Ireland remains a ſeparate Country from Great Britain, Great Britain is not pledged upon any ſpecific principle to ſupport one ſect in Ireland more than another; if ſhe cannot preſerve the connexion of the two kingdoms by upholding the Proteſtants in their eſtabliſhment, their power and their property, I know not by what tie ſhe is debarred from aſſiſting the Catholics—for whilſt the kingdoms are ſeparate and independent, Ireland, except where the Crown is concerned, is merely bound by the ties of intereſt to England, and in a ſimilar manner England is only bound by the Rights of the Crown and ties of intereſt to Ireland. She is pledged to preſerve Ireland to the Britiſh Crown, but not to any particular means or any particular principles for maintaining that connexion. But if Ireland was once united to Great Britain by a Legiſlative Union, and the maintenance of the Proteſtant Eſtabliſhment were made a fundamental article of that Union, then the whole Power of the Empire would be pledged to the Church eſtabliſhments of Ireland, and the property of the whole empire would be pledged in ſupport of the property of every part.

An objection to this reaſoning has been made by ſtating that an Union would increaſe Abſentee Proprietors; that the proprietors of eſtates are generally Proteſtants; that of courſe Proteſtant influence would decreaſe, and conſequently the ſecurity for Proteſtant property.

The anſwer to this objection is, that it does not appear that the Abſentees from Scotland iucreaſed after the Union, and that an argument from experience in political reaſoning is ſuperior to any ar-

gument in theory. Another mode of reply is, that ſuppoſe Abſentees were to be increaſed, this evil would be compenſated by the ſolid advantage of having a fixed unalterable Conſtitution, and of having the whole power and property of Gt. Britain its guarantees. When once the hope of change were at an end, and the hope of forcing ſuch a change deſtroyed, diſſatisfaction would ſink into acquieſcence, and acquieſcence ſoften into content.

Another objection is, that if an Union be made upon Proteſtant Principles, it cannot fail to excite the oppoſition of the Catholics, and to encreaſe their diſaffection to a Government which perpetually bars them from power; that conſequently the Catholics would be more and more diſpoſed to cultivate a foreign connexion, and when free from the vigilance of a Proteſtant Reſident Parliament, more likely to effectuate that connexion, and the plans reſulting from it without being detected.

To ſolve this objection it is only neceſſary to ſtate it as a *petitio principii*. What ground is there to aſſume that the Catholics will oppoſe an Union, though founded on Proteſtant Principles?

Why may not an Union be ſo ſhaped as to be favourable to the Proteſtants, without being unfavourable to the Catholics?

Firſt—A Free Toleration will be ſecured to their Religion. Their power of electing Repreſentatives will be perpetuated, as well as their capacity of filling moſt of the offices of State.

Second—It may be adviſeable to connect with an Union a proper ſupport for their Clergy and ſome ſyſtem of regulation for their Church, not inconſiſtent with their Eccleſiaſtical Principles, and calculated to do away miſconceptions of their religious tenets, and to diſcontinue practices which have been attended with inconvenience.

Third—The diſſentions which ariſe in counties from Candidates ſtanding on the Proteſtant or Catholic intereſts, and all little pariſh jealouſies will

ceaſe, from which circumſtance great inconveniencies have been already felt.

Fourth—If the Proteſtant Intereſt be ſecured, there will be no neceſſary ſtate partiality towards Proteſtants, which is a natural ſource of complaint.

Fifth—Catholics will feel more confident under a Legiſlature framed upon a more extended baſis, where the majority of members will not be influenced againſt them by local prejudices or antipathies.

Sixth—Sectarian ſtruggle will terminate, and tranquillity being reſtored, animoſities will gradually relax, and there being no ground for political jealouſy and contention, the habits and connexions of ſocial life will re-produce confidence and friendſhips, where exiſt, at preſent, rivalry and ſuſpicion.

Seventh—An opening may be left in any plan of Union, for the future admiſſion of Catholics to additional privileges. And Proteſtants can never object to ſuch an opening, as they may reſt aſſured, that the Britiſh Proteſtant Parliament will not imprudently admit Catholic pretenſions as the Teſt Laws could not be partially repealed; and it is evident, that the Catholics could not force their claims with hoſtility againſt the whole power of Great Britain and Ireland.

Eighth—The Catholics are moſt numerous in the ſouth and weſt of Ireland; and it is conceived, that thoſe parts of the kingdom would be moſt benefited by an Union, as to agricultural and commercial advantages.

Ninth—As all the ſtruggles of the Catholics for political predominancy have failed, and as they cannot hope to carry their wiſhes by domeſtic or even foreign force, they would do well to adopt a ſettlement, which would enſure them many political and all civil advantages, and reſt ſatisfied with a much greater degree of toleration than Proteſtants have ever enjoyed under a Catholic ſtate.

To anſwer the other objection which was ſtated,

we may obſerve, it does not follow that, if an Union were made, that the government of Ireland would be leſs vigilantly adminiſtered; it probably would be adminiſtered with more attention; becauſe it would be leſs diſtracted by the buſineſs of party and of Parliament; and for the ſame reaſons, it would be adminiſtered more impartially.

With regard to Diſſenters, they are ſuppoſed to be in a ratio of about one-ſeventh to the whole population of the kingdom, and of one-ſixth to the Catholics. They are moſtly manufacturers, and ſome of them are merchants; but they have little influence in the preſent repreſentation.

Whilſt Ireland remains a ſeparate kingdom, they are the leaſt conſiderable body of the people —but were an Union formed with Great Britain, the Diſſenting intereſt would be in a very different ratio in the empire, and their importance and power would proportionably riſe.

It is difficult to comprehend the wiſdom of their junction with the Catholics, in order to overthrow the Proteſtant power and eſtabliſhment; for, ſuppoſing their project to have been completed, they would have been at the mercy of their allies.

If they had ſucceeded in their plans with the Catholics, their conſequence in the State would have been probably annihilated; if an Union takes place, their importance in the empire will encreaſe; and, as to their ſtaple manufacture, it will be ſecured for ever.

As it is probable that a modus for Tythes will accompany the meaſure of an Union, both Catholics and Diſſenters would be eſſentially relieved and benefited by that part of a new ſyſtem.

Some perſons have conceived that it might be advantageous to the Diſſenters, if the government of their Church were more aſſimilated to the Church of Scotland, which is under the moſt excellent diſcipline; but when the ſtumbling block of Tythes is removed, they may probably fall

in with the Proteſtant Church. The cauſes of difference between Proteſtants and Diſſenters have been for ſome time obſolate, and they reſort to ſeparate congregations, more from early prejudice and cuſtom, than from any rational or even alledged neceſſity.

Having conſidered briefly in what manner an Union would affect the great religious deſcriptions of the people, we may proceed to examine its influence on the different orders and claſſes of the State.

The Peerage would probably, in any plan of Union, be repreſented like the Scotch peers, by a delegation to the Britiſh Parliament. This arrangement would not affect thoſe nobles who are peers of Great Britain, and it would be favourable to thoſe who reſide in Great Britain. There are forty-one of the former claſs, and about eighty of the latter. The remaining foreſcore peers who attend Parliament occaſionally, would be the only peers materially intereſted, but almoſt all of them have conſiderable property in land; and as all perſonal privileges and prerogatives would remain to them, the general advantages of an Union, in giving permanent ſecurity to their titles and their properties, would compenſate any diminution of conſequence they might feel from their not being all certain of ſeats in the Britiſh Parliament.

The ſpiritual peers would be amply recompenſed by the ſecurity given to their dioceſan eſtates, and to the general intereſts and eſtabliſhment of the church.

The ſame reaſoning will apply to thoſe who have parliamentary influence in the Houſe of Commons: Yet it muſt be acknowledged that ſome ſacrifices muſt be made of power, of emolument, of importance. Many ſchemes have been in circulation for adjuſting the repreſentation of this kingdom in the Britiſh Parliament. It is not the deſign of this publication to examine them; but can it be doubt-

ed that a reaſonable repreſentation may be ſelected, which, however it muſt interfere with the conveniencies of ſome individuals, will give this kingdom a proportionate influence in the Houſe of Commons of the empire? There is no difficulty in the ſubject ſo great, which may not be obviated, if an Union is of importance to be attained, and if we ſeriouſly endeavour to effect it.

The chief oppoſition to the meaſure muſt be expected from the Bar, who are ſuppoſed to be more perſonally intereſted againſt it than any claſs in ſociety. It is a general habit in the gentlemen of Ireland to educate their ſons at the Temple, and the number of barriſters is much greater in proportion here than in England. And as the profeſſion will not ſupport, by any means, the numbers which purſue it, lawyers in Ireland extend their circle to politics, and are very numerous in Parliament, and extremely active in the buſineſs of it. In England there are few lawyers in the Houſe of Commons; whereas in Ireland they are a formidable phalanx. Were a legiſlative Union to take place, Iriſh lawyers would be deprived of the parliamentary market for their abilities and ambition; they could not attend the Britiſh Parliament without renouncing buſineſs; they would be entirely confined to profeſſional proſpects; and mere political emoluments and ſituations would be taken from their graſp.

But when oppoſition to an Union comes forward from the Bar, it muſt be taken into conſideration, that the very reaſons which make the Bar oppoſe an Union, are arguments in favour of it.

1. It is obviouſly the intereſt of the nation, that the law ſhould be accurately and deeply ſtudied; and it will be more probable that ſtudents will pay attention to their profeſſion when their hopes of advancement are confined to knowledge and ability in the line of it. In proportion as you have abler lawyers, you will have abler judges, eſpecially

when the temptation of placing them upon the bench, from political reaſons, is removed.

2. It is obvious that it would be prudent to exclude from the Legiſlature, young adventurers, who have but little ſtake in the country, who have acquired by habit a facility of ſpeaking upon every ſubject, and upon every ſide of a ſubject, and who only conſider a ſeat in Parliament as the means of bringing their abilities to market.

It does not, however appear, that the proſpects of the Bar would be materially injured by an Union; the offices to which lawyers are uſually appointed, would remain the ſame; and if the road to them was more through profeſſional merit, than Parliamentary ſervices, it does not appear, that either the Bar or the Public would be injured.

It is ſaid, alſo, that the oppoſition of the Bar is not likely to be unanimous; and that ſome leading characters, who have thought moſt on the ſubject, and who are capable of thinking beſt, who ought to have great weight, where their intereſt is in no ſhape concerned, and where purſuit of public good can alone ſway their opinions; ſo far from conſidering an Union as deſtructive, conceive it as pregnant with ſolid and permanent benefit. Aged and experienced characters are certainly as liable to political temptations, as the virtuous ardency of youth; but where no private intereſt can operate, and eſpecially where the point of intereſt, the *cui bono*, lies againſt an opinion given, one ſhould never heſitate between the natural precipitation of youth, and the cautious deciſions of experience.

To demonſtrate to the Clergy the advantages of an Union, would be loſt labour indeed; if they are ſuppoſed in general to be ſufficiently ſenſible to the intereſts of the Church, we may ſafely leave them to their uſual diſcernment, in the queſtion before us.

The gentlemen of landed property, would be merely affected, as the proſperity of the kingdom in general would be increaſed or diminiſhed. If an Union would produce tranquillity, ſecurity, commercial and agricultural advantages, eſtates in lands would be proportionably benefited. Political conteſts, party ſtruggles may be the harveſt of enterprizing adventurers; but they blight the hopes, and blaſt the fortunes of country gentlemen. Land in England, during times of peace, is ſold from thirty to forty years purchaſe; in Ireland the price of land ſeldom exceeds twenty years purchaſe. This is attributable to the ſuppoſed different ſtate of tranquillity and ſecurity of the two kingdoms. The continual inſurrections in different parts of the country, of White Boys, Oak Boys, Right Boys, Defenders, United Iriſhmen, have made reſidence unſafe, and diminiſhed the certainty of rents, and the value of tenure. If it is probable that an Union would put an end to theſe diſorders, by introducing ſteadineſs of adminiſtration, and regular ſubordination, the value of eſtates would gradually riſe to the Engliſh level, and ſpeculators in land, would naturally prefer this kingdom as the ſcene of improvement and experiment in proportion as the ſoil is in general ſuperior to that of England, and from being leſs improved, more fit for experiment. The monied capital of England, has of late years been increaſed to ſuch a degree, that, notwithſtanding the enormous loans which have been borrowed by Government, the monied men are embarraſſed in what manner to inveſt their capitals with advantage and ſecurity. When a peace arrives, and loans ſhall ceaſe, the difficulty of employing capital will be augmented; and there can be no doubt that, if the ſtate of this country can be rendered ſecure, it will be abundantly employed in Iriſh purchaſes and Iriſh ſpeculation.

It is alſo certain, that Great Britain does not produce ſufficient corn for her conſumption; it muſt be a great object, therefore, for Iriſh landed gentlemen to ſecure a preference in the Britiſh market for ever, which an Union would certainly effect.

As we ſuppoſe the Union, which we are diſcuſſing, will confer all commercial advantages which Great Britain enjoys upon Iriſh ſubjects, it would be loſt time to prove that our merchants muſt be gainers by the meaſure. The Britiſh adminiſtration, in order to encreaſe the wealth of the kingdom, for the purpoſes of power, are perpetually employed in deviſing the means of extending the commerce of England; and under the wiſe regulations of that Government, a commerce has been eſtabliſhed, and by the late naval victories has been ſecured, which is the aſtoniſhment of the world. An Union then will place the Iriſh merchant upon an equality with the Britiſh, and he will be certain to enjoy, for ever, the ſame privileges, protection, regulations, bounties and encouragements, as are enjoyed by the greateſt commercial country that ever flouriſhed.

The queſtion of Union will be debated in the metropolis, and one of the chief arguments againſt it is, that it will ruin the metropolis, and render it a deſert. The ſame argument was uſed moſt powerfully at the time of the Scotch Union, with regard to Edinburgh: the deſertion of that capital was predicted; the bankruptcy of its ſhopkeepers, the ruin of its proprietors, were foretold and inſiſted upon; yet notwithſtanding the Union, and the prophecy, Edinburgh, ſo far from decaying, has flouriſhed more ſince the Union, than it had done before. It will be conſidered, that Dublin *muſt* ſtill be the reſidence of a Viceroy and his court; that ſciences, arts, amuſements, may be cultivated in proportion, as there will be leſs attention to politics; that it will be the ſeat of juſtice, which will be adminiſtered as at preſent; the chief ſeat of revenue, and the head quarters of

the army. It will probably monopolize the corn trade between Great Britain and Ireland; and from the circumſtance of the Canals, which are making in every part of England, and communicating with London, its commerce for all Engliſh goods with Liverpool, will greatly increaſe; and in proportion, as canals from Dublin are carried to different parts of the kingdom, it will be the depot for their conſumption in all articles of Britiſh manufacture and import.

A ſimilar prediction is made as to the depopulation of the country in general; and with much leſs reaſon. For what induces reſidence? Is it not peace, and comfort, and ſecurity? What has baniſhed ſo many families, but the loſs of theſe invaluable bleſſings. Reſtore to Ireland good humour and tranquillity, and comfort, and ſecurity; her fugitives will ſoon return. Taxes will be lower in Ireland, living will be cheaper. Theſe advantages, aſſiſted by the natural attraction of property, and the place of nativity, will ſoon bring back the proprietors of the ſoil. Property is ever fluctuating; men of eſtate are apt to be imprudent and prodigal; and the accumulations of wealth, acquired by the lawyer, the merchant, the manufacturer, and the farmer, are ultimately inveſted in the purchaſe of land. New purchaſers do not eaſily abandon their property; as, therefore the wealth and trade of the country encreaſe, the purchaſers of land will encreaſe, and with new purchaſers new reſidents.

The adverſaries of an Union admit, that it will be beneficial to trade and manufactures; we need not then be terrified by alarms of depopulation.

The next city in conſequence to the metropolis is Cork, which enjoys a ſituation particularly calculated for foreign trade, and an excellent harbour for Men of War to reſort to, for the protection of the iſland and its commerce. It is alſo the emporium of proviſions for the Britiſh navy, and a

place for all homeward bound convoys to make to in times of war, when the channel might be dangerous to approach. From the convenience of the ſituation of Cork, it would probably, after an Union, become a Marine Station, and a Dock-yard would be there formed. It is known that the three preſent harbours of England, viz. the Thames, Portſmouth, and Plymouth, are inadequate to the extent of the navy; and that a new ſtation is greatly wanted. If an Union were once effected, there can be little doubt that Cork would be ſelected for the purpoſe.

Limerick and Waterford would not be particularly affected, except in proportion as an Union, by inducing the import of Britiſh capital, and the general extenſion of trade, ſhould naturally augment their commercial exertions; and this general argument is applicable to all parts of the South-weſt.

With regard to the North of Ireland, which carries on a manufacture of linen, of which 52,000,000 of yards have been exported in one year; all that can be deſired is to confirm a trade, which, by its extent, ſeems a monopoly. Great-Britain gives a preference in her market, to Iriſh over German linens of 37 per cent. and grants a bounty of three half-pence a yard on all Iriſh linens re-exported, the value of which does not exceed eighteen-pence a yard. Theſe advantages in favour of the North of Ireland, England might repeal or diminiſh, whenever ſhe pleaſes; by an Union, they might be fixed for ever.

It may now be deſirable to obviate ſeveral objections which are naturally and generally brought forward to diſſuade Ireland from an Union.

Firſt—*An Union would extinguiſh Ireland.* The name may remain, and ſurely it will not extinguiſh the people and the ſoil; though it may meliorate both. If its repreſentatives ſit in the ſame place

with its Executive, and by that means obtain great influence in the councils of the Empire; and the ſame ſecurity for its ſituation as the people of England enjoy, how will Ireland be extinguiſhed?

Second.—*What can be ſuch madneſs and folly as for a people to ſend its Legiſlature from the Metropolis of their own Country, which is convenient to all its Members, to ſit in the Metropolis of another Country, ſeparated by the ſea, at a great diſtance, to the inconvenience of all its Members?*

The anſwer to this objection is, that Ireland is part of an Empire; that the King of Ireland reſides in that diſtant Metropolis; that having two Legiſlatures in one Empire is incompatible with its ſafety; that a Conſolidation of thoſe Legiſlatures promiſes great advantages; that the diſtance of Ireland from the Metropolis of England, is not greater than that of Scotland; that in the French Republic the diſtance of Toulon and many other parts from Paris, is much greater than the diſtance of Dublin from London; and that in America the diſtance of Charleſtown and other Capitals from Philadelphia, is in the ſame proportion; yet no inconvenience is felt in theſe caſes; and the inconvenience of diſtance may be eaſily balanced by the advantages of Union.

Third.—*Shall we tamely reſign that Legiſlature whoſe Independence was ſo glorioufly aſſerted and eſtabliſhed by the arms of the Volunteers?*

It is not intended to detract from the merit of the Volunteers of Ireland. In aſſerting the independence of the Legiſlature of Ireland, they were convinced they were promoting her happineſs and ſecurity; they meant well, they acted nobly, but they have failed in ſucceſs. The ſecurity and happineſs of Ireland is at preſent ſuſpended. It does not appear that the continuance of a ſeparate Legiſlature wil reſtore it. Some new arrangement muſt be tried. If the Volunteers of Ireland armed

for the happineſs of their country, they armed for a ſeparate Legiſlature, provided that could obtain it; but if that has failed, and nothing but an Union can procure it, they armed for an Union; it was not the means but the end which was in their contemplation. To ſecure the liberty and the property of their countrymen, to encreaſe the happineſs and proſperity of their country, were their object; and whoever beſt purſues that object, fights in their cauſe, and enliſts under their banners. Can we ſuppoſe, if, in 1779, Ireland had been united to Great Britain by an indentity of Legiſlature; that if her privileges had been equally great, and equally eſtabliſhed; that if we had then been in the enjoyment of a trade as free as the commerce of England; if her liberties had been ſecured by the Habeas Corpus Bill; if our judges had been independent, and if we had not been degraded by Legiſlating Privy Councils—in ſhort, if our Conſtitution had been the ſame as the Britiſh, that the Volunteers would have ſtood forth to deſtroy the proſperity and happineſs of ſuch a ſtate, and have diſſolved that Union which produced them? Would they not, on the contrary, have conſidered any attempt to ſeparate the kingdoms as hoſtile, and have treated the adviſers of ſuch folly as enemies?

Nor was it ſo much the theoretic defects of our former connexion with Great Britain, which rouſed the Volunteers, as the practical evils reſulting from it, and eſpecially the reſtraints upon our commerce. But their acquiſitions, which removed thoſe evils and reſtraints, have produced, (as was at the time foretold) new inconveniencies and evils: What then is the ſtate of the caſe? a ſubordination of the Iriſh Legiſlature to the Britiſh, has been experienced and found injurious; a ſeparate Legiſlature has been tried, and proved inadequate to ſecure our happineſs; an incorporation with the Britiſh Parliament may ſtill be reſorted to, which promiſes the ſecurity of our ſubordinate ſtate, the advantages

of our independent ſituation, and is in theory preferable to both.

Fourth.—*Muſt it not be the height of folly to part with the management of our own concerns for ever?*

The obvious anſwer is, that, in a fair Legiſlative Union with Great Britain, we ſhall retain as far as is neceſſary, and not part with at all the management of our concerns. We ſhall have Iriſhmen in the originating Cabinet of Great Britain; we ſhall have a number of Iriſh Repreſentatives, in proportion to our relative conſequence, in the Parliament of the Empire. Our affairs will be there diſcuſſed by our own Members, in the preſence of the wiſeſt and freeſt aſſembly which ever exiſted, where our intereſt is their intereſt, our proſperity their proſperity, our power their aggrandizement, and where of courſe the anxiety for our welfare muſt be as great in the Britiſh as in the Iriſh part of the Legiſlature.

But this objection might as well be urged by Yorkſhire, or any county in England as by Ireland. It will be ſaid the Members for Great Britain will out-number the Members for Ireland, as five to one; ſo may Yorkſhire complain that the Members for Great Britain are in proportion to the Members for Yorkſhire as fifty to one.

The ſame weak argument was advanced at the time of the Union of Scotland; it was then refuted in terms, it has ſince been refuted by experience.

Fifth.—*A kingdom that ſubjects its own Legiſlature to the will of another kingdom, becomes its ſlave.*

Let the poſition be granted and let it be allowed that it is true, with reſpect to an Union of deſpotic countries; with regard to an Union of free countries it does not apply. For an Union, preſuppoſing that the Legiſlature of the united empire is compoſed of numbers of repreſentatives, proportionate to its competent parts, and that the laws to be made muſt attach generally and not partially,

and that there is an identity of privileges and intereſts throughout the whole; it will follow, that ſo long as any part of the Union remains free, the whole will remain free. Who would deſire to have better ſecurity for his liberty than an Engliſhman poſſeſſes for his? The liberties of the empire are at preſent maintained by a ſeparate body of repreſentatives of Great Britain, and a ſeparate body of repreſentatives for Ireland; how will either be endangered when a common body of repreſentatives ſhall be formed on a ſcheme of mutual intereſts for the joint preſervation of both.

Sixth.—It is urged *that the preſent is a moſt improper time to agitate the queſtion, when the people are in ſuch a ſtate of irritation and turbulence, and the kingdom engaged in war.*

It may be argued on the other hand, that the preſent is the period moſt adapted for its diſcuſſion, for whilſt the feelings of our late misfortunes are freſh, it is natural that we ſhould be anxious to provide every ſafeguard againſt their recurrence, and that we ought not to adjourn the conſideration of our permanent ſafety to a caſual interval of peace, when a temporary enjoyment of tranquillity may render us indifferent and regardleſs.

As to a time of war, it is true, that the Volunteers took advantage of the embarraſſments of Great Britain in the laſt war, to aſſert the independence of our Parliament. It is likewiſe true, that the United Iriſhmen in the preſent war have taken advantage of the ſuppoſed weakneſs of Great Britain to play the game of ſeparation. When, therefore, enemies of the empire take advantage of a time of war and embarraſſment to effect its ruin, we ſhould turn againſt them their own game, and make uſe of a time of war to eſtabliſh its ſecurity.

Seventh.—*The queſtion of Union is beyond the power and competence of Parliament; a Houſe of Commons elected for eight years, cannot aboliſh the Houſe of Commons for ever.*

This objection is eaſily anſwered by conſidering the end of Legiſlative Inſtitutions, by which their competency is beſt defined. The end for which Legiſlature is eſtabliſhed by a free people is to maintain their property, to protect their charters, to ſecure the liberty of their perſons, and to conſult the convenience and happineſs of the people. Now if it be not poſſible for a Legiſlature to enſure theſe ends to its conſtituents by preſerving itſelf ſeparate from another kingdom; and, if by uniting itſelf with another kingdom, it is certain or highly probable that theſe ends will be attained; it follows that were a Legiſlature to refuſe entertaining ſuch a queſtion, it would deſert its duty, which is the purſuit of the general good. That, in the diſcuſſion of the queſtion, the Legiſlature ought to liſten to the opinion of the people, is true, and it will not act againſt that opinion if univerſal; but on the other hand, it ought not to be terrified by the clamour of a few, and ſhould be ſatisfied by general acquieſcence.

If this argument had any real weight, we could never have obtained the reformation and the eſtabliſhment of Proteſtaniſm; we could never have procured the Revolution, and have changed the line of hereditary ſucceſſion to the throne: the Union of Scotland and England could not have been entertained. It is a common maxim in logic, that what proves too much, proves nothing; and if this maxim is applicable to ſubjects, where ſtrict reaſoning is required, it cannot be excluded from political arguments, where probabilities and experiences muſt be reſorted to; and queſtions are to be decided by the principles of moral reaſoning, not by mathematical preciſion.

Eighth.—The arguments from national dignity, and national pride, have been obviated already; but as they will be repeatedly urged, as being eaſy topics of declamation, another mode of refuting them may be ſuggeſted.

Ireland, independent Ireland, has, at this moment, its commerce, in all parts of the world, protected, without expence, by the Britiſh Navy. Her ſupplies for the year are chiefly raiſed by the Britiſh Miniſter in England, on the faith of the Britiſh Parliament; her country is protected from domeſtic and foreign enemies, by forty thouſand Britiſh troops, at the expence, to Great Britain, of ſeven hundred thouſand pounds a-year. If her dignity and pride do not ſuffer by receiving ſuch aſſiſtance and protection, how can they be injured, if ſhe makes herſelf a part of that nation, incorporates her Legiſlature into that of Great Britain, and converts that protection, which ſhe now receives as a favour, into a right?

Ninth.—*When Ireland was ſubject to the controul of the Britiſh Parliament, was ſhe not then kept down in a wretched ſtate of penury, by the tyranny of Great Britain; and will ſhe not be reduced to a ſimilar ſtate, by again ſubjecting her repreſentative to theirs? Has not all the improvement of the kingdom ariſen from the exertions of a free Legiſlature; and ſhall we conſent to part with that power, which has been the only cauſe of our proſperity?*

This argument would have ſome weight if an Union were a ſtate of ſubjection, from which it is eſſentially diſtinguiſhed, as has been demonſtrated before. The great advantage of an Union is, that it places Ireland on an equality with Great Britain, and prevents its ſubjection for ever. The vice of our former connexion with England was, that Great Britain made laws to bind Ireland, without binding herſelf at the ſame time, by the ſame laws. After an Union, partial laws cannot be made, where general intereſt is concerned; we ſhall have full ſecurity that the Britiſh United Parliament will never injure Ireland, becauſe it muſt at the ſame time injure herſelf, and this is the beſt poſſible ſecurity.

It is certain, that ſince the independence of the Iriſh Legiſlature, our commerce has increaſed; but that has been effected by Great Britain admitting us to her Colony trade, and by relaxing the Navigation Laws; and if the giving us ſome of the advantages of Britiſh Commerce, has been of ſuch benefit already, what progreſs may we not expect, when all the advantages of the Britiſh Market, and Britiſh Commerce, ſhall be ſecured to us for ever, which cannot fail to be the effect of an Union!

Tenth.—*An Union muſt be our ruin or deſtruction; all we want is a good ſteady Adminiſtration, wiſely and firmly conducted, and then all things will go well.*

Here we muſt aſk, what is meant by *a firm and ſteady Adminiſtration?* Does it mean ſuch an Adminiſtration as tends to the encreaſe of the nation in population, its advancement in agriculture, in manufactures, in wealth and proſperity? If that is intended, we have had the experience of it theſe twenty years; for it is univerſally admitted, that no country in the world ever made ſuch rapid advances as Ireland has done in theſe reſpects; yet, all her acceſſion of proſperity has been of no avail; diſcontent has kept pace with improvement, diſcord has grown up with our wealth, conſpiracy and rebellion have ſhot up with our proſperity.

What then is intended by a *ſteady and firm Adminiſtration?* Is it a determined, inflexible ſupport of Proteſtant Aſcendency, and a rigorous and indignant rejection of Catholic claims? Who will be a guarantee of that ſyſtem, and whom will it content? The Catholics will not acquieſce in its propriety. A party of Proteſtants in Ireland, term it unjuſt and abſurd; another party in England, term it by fouler names; great leaders in oppoſition, poſſibly the future miniſters of England, may condemn it; and ſome members of the

Britiſh Cabinet are ſuppoſed to be adverſe to it. Its ſtability may reſt upon accident, upon the death of a *ſingle* character, upon the change of a Miniſter, on the temper of a Lord Lieutenant; and the policy of this ſyſtem is much doubted by the people of England.

But perhaps *a firm and ſteady Adminiſtration* means Catholic Emancipation and Reform. Dr. M'Nevin, however, and the United Iriſhmen, aſſure us, that theſe meaſures are the certain introduction of Separation and Republicaniſm, and that they were merely adopted with that view by the United Iriſhmen. *Fas eſt & ab hoſte doceri.*

If then mere attention to agricultural and commercial proſperity, and to general improvement, will not preſerve good order, ſubordination, and allegiance; if the power of maintaining Proteſtant Aſcendency is uncertain, and the project of Catholic Emancipation and Reform is pregnant with danger, ought we to reject the conſideration of a meaſure with contumely and diſdain, which places our Conſtitution on the ſame footing of ſecurity as that of Great Britain, and holds out Britiſh Principles, Britiſh Honour, and Britiſh Power, as the guarantee of our Liberties and Eſtabliſhment.

A few of the topics relating to an Union have been now diſcuſſed, and it is hoped they have been diſcuſſed in ſuch a manner as to prove that the ſubject of an Union with Great Britain deſerves the ſerious and calm deliberation of every honeſt man; that it is not to be encountered by paſſion, nor combated with arms.

An Union has this advantage—it may be our ſalvation; it cannot be our ruin.

Equal liberty, equal privilege with the people of Great Britain, guaranteed by a Parliament compoſed from the Repreſentatives of both kingdoms, and upheld by the power of all the ſubjects of the two iſlands; in ſhort, the conſolidation of Great Britain and Ireland into one kingdom, with one

Conſtitution, one King, one Law, one Religion, can never be the ruin of Ireland. It widens the foundation of our liberties, it advances our proſpects of improvement, it ſtrengthens the baſis of proſperity by encreaſing domeſtic ſecurity, and enſures our Imperial Independence by conſolidating our power.

There may be prejudices to overcome; there may be private intereſts to manage and to compenſate; there may be the intrigues of our enemies to counteract; but if the nature of our ſituation, our permanent and great intereſts, demonſtrate an Union to be ſalutary for our perpetual improvement, ſecurity, and ſtability, let us boldly follow where our reaſon leads, though private intereſt and local prejudice, and hoſtile intrigue, ſhall attempt to impede and arreſt our progreſs.

The deſign of what has been written is to remove any improper prepoſſeſſion againſt an Union in general; the detail of the ſubject has not been entered upon. It may be obſerved, however, that the following points are ſuppoſed:

Firſt.—The preſervation of the Proteſtant religion and eſtabliſhment, as a fundamental article.

Second.—An equitable number of Peers and Commoners, to ſit in the Parliament of the Empire.

Third.—An equality of Rights and Privileges, and a fair adjuſtment of commerce.

Fourth.—An equitable arrangement as to revenues, debts and future taxes, ſuitable to our ſituation and powers.

Fifth.—The continuance of the civil adminiſtration in Ireland, as it ſtands at preſent, accommodated to the new ſituation of the kingdom.

Sixth.—An arrangement for the Roman Catholic clergy, ſo as to put an end, if poſſible, to religious jealouſies, and to enſure the attachment of that order of men to the ſtate.

Seventh.—Some further proviſion to the Diſſenting clergy.

Eighth.—An arrangement with reſpect to tithes.

It is ſurely poſſible that all theſe points may be properly adjuſted, by wiſe and able men, ſo as to prove upon the whole a rational and permanent ſyſtem upon which we may ſecurely cloſe up our intereſts with thoſe of Great Britain: But it would be uſeleſs to enter into the detail of any meaſure, ſo long as the public mind ſhould refuſe to diſcuſs its principle. If all advantages are to be rejected, becauſe they cannot be obtained but through the medium of an Union; if we had rather continue in turbulent inſecurity, than be united in proſperity and happineſs with Great Britain; and if we prefer adhering with tenacious obſtinacy to falſe notions of Pride, rather than to cheriſh the ſentiments of true independence, the labour of detailed reaſoning would be loſt and futile.

But as we truſt the foregoing obſervations may tend to incline every rational mind to a fair Examination and Enquiry, we may hereafter proſit on the diſpoſition and temper of the Public, and ſuggeſt a ſcheme for conſideration, accompanied with calculations and details.

Some of the ſtatements which have been made in this publication, ſeem to have the tendency of increaſing Party Animoſity; whereas the object of the writer is to reconcile and extinguiſh them; but he knows not how to induce men to think rightly, without making them ſee their ſituation and confeſs it.

The premiſes which have been ſtated cannot be controverted. If our ſituation be imputed to mal-adminiſtration, who can ſecure us from its recurrence? If to the inſtability of affairs, who can inſure their future conſiſtency? If to the prevalence of the Proteſtant Monopoly, who can induce men to relinquiſh what appears to them the ſecurity for their properties? If to the efforts of the Catholics, who can force them to abandon their claims?

Is there not ſome ſettlement to be anxiouſly wiſhed for, which may lay theſe cauſes of diſcontent aſleep, and quiet them for ever? We have been ſufficiently diſtracted and harraſſed. We have drank enough from the bitter cup of diſſenſion. Shall then any attempt to enſure tranquillity be the ſource of diſcord; ſhall the diſcuſſion of a plauſible theory lead to paſſion and reſentment; and an honeſt attempt to allay the commotions of the State, and to ſettle its jarring intereſts, be a provocation to new animoſities and freſh outrage?

The enemies of the empire have ſtated, that Ireland can never be happy until ſhe is ſeparated from England; it is the opinion of many of her friends, that ſhe never can be truly happy till ſhe is entirely united with England.

The one attempt would make Ireland the ſcene of conteſt in Europe; would deluge her with blood; would reduce her to deſolation: the latter by making her power the power of Great Britain, and the power of Great Britain her own, would enable the Britiſh Empire to defy every hoſtile attack, and to ſecure, to the happy coaſts of the two iſlands, all the bleſſings of genuine and rational liberty, of true and ſolid independence and ſecurity.

FINIS.